



Health and Human Services **MEDIA RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



April 10, 2017

Sexually Transmitted Diseases can be prevented

Talk. Test. Treat. – No cost testing available

SARASOTA COUNTY—The Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County (DOH-Sarasota) is recognizing April as Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Awareness Month. The theme is “*Talk. Test. Treat.*” Health officials say syphilis, which was on the brink of elimination, has made a comeback in many communities across the country including Sarasota County. During 2016, almost 60 syphilis cases were reported. In previous years, the number of cases syphilis cases reported annually ranged from 20-35. More than 75 percent of all reported STDs in Sarasota County occur among those 15 to 29 years of age.

“Casual, unprotected sex with multiple partners is risky and is believed to have fueled this increase,” says DOH-Sarasota Medical Director, William Heymann, MD. “It is easy to let your guard down and not think about STDs like syphilis, gonorrhea, chlamydia and HIV which do not always produce symptoms. Left untreated syphilis and HIV can be life threatening.”

Protect your health by getting tested. DOH-Sarasota offers no-cost walk-in testing program at the William L. Little Health and Human Services Center, 2200 Ringling Boulevard in Sarasota and at various sites around the community through their [Health in Motion](#) mobile health services. DOH-Sarasota also offers partner notification services to persons infected with or suspected of being infected with STDs to prevent the spread of infections. Treatment is available at DOH-Sarasota’s downtown Sarasota and North Port locations.



STDs including HIV can be effectively prevented and treated.

- **Protect yourself.** The best way to prevent STDs is not to have sex. If you do have sex, use a new condom every time. Do not share needles or syringes for any reason, whether to inject drugs (recreational or medical) or for tattoos and body piercing.
- **Talk about sex and STDs with your partners.** Find out when they were last tested for STDs and what their status was. STDs are primarily spread through three fluids--semen, vaginal fluids and blood.
- **Talk to your doctor.** If you are sexually active, you are at risk for STDs. Talk with your doctor about your risk and appropriate STD testing.



MEDIA NOTES:

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For more information about where to get tested at no-cost, visit www.sarasotahealth.org or call 941-861-2873.

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](http://PublicHealthAccreditationBoard.org), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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Sarasota County prohibits discrimination in all services, programs or activities.

View the complete policy at www.scgov.net/ADA/Pages/default.aspx

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